



MEETING NOTES

Project: Embarcadero Plaza Refresh

Meeting Date: January 21, 2025

Meeting Location: Hybrid Teams Call and BXP's offices at
2 Embarcadero Center, Suite
#300Microsoft

Notes By: Roana Tirado

Participants: SF Park & Rec:

LB: Lisa Bransten (online)
KR: Kelli Rudnick (online)
EG: Eoanna Goodwin

BxP:

AF: Aaron Fenton

Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum (HOK)

BJ: Brian Jencek
RT: Roana Tirado (online)
YK: Yong Uk Kim

The following meeting notes were prepared by HOK. The notes reflect the author's understanding of discussions and provide a record of the agreements reached at the meeting. Should any of those present have different recollections or find errors or omissions in the notes, please advise the author in writing within five calendar days of receipt of the meeting notes. The failure to notify HOK of errors or omissions within a reasonable time following receipt of the meeting notes is deemed acceptance of the discussions and record of agreements stated herein.

Notes:

Item No.	Item	Action By	Date Req'd.
	Meeting Purpose: Bi-weekly Project Delivery Meeting		
1	Community Meeting Deck V1 Comments 1) HOK shared draft deck (see attached) a) Agenda Comments i) Update title to Embarcadero Plaza and Sue Bierman Park ii) SFRPD to lead welcome and project team introductions iii) SFRPD to share "ground rules" at beginning of presentation b) Missing Content Comments i) Include slide on 'Why improve this park now' ii) Include content with physical and visual barriers that block key landmark views to the Ferry building and waterfront as well as barriers that hinder pedestrian circulation (bring back in photos of the planters/walls/fountain) iii) Slide on gap analysis to be provided by SFRPD (information on what amenities/features are in the park/plaza/vicinity) as a slide prior to Stations Overview, and/or include in Future Uses board 1. SFRPD Planning division is compiling data on plaza and Ferry building usage. Will provide material to team iv) SFRPD to create project website and QR code for use in slide deck and meeting notices c) Talking Points Comments i) Team to note the positioning of crosswalk relative to the city option is an additional "pro" for added pedestrian safety. ii) Presenters to reinforce that this project is a public space that acts as 'spider' to many areas in San Francisco iii) Weave in universal accessibility for barriers content iv) Level changes in plaza: note that sunken courtyards are notorious for limiting sight lines and perceived lack of safety		



	v) Additional rational for 'why improve the park now': plaza is so much less vibrant, whereas the ferry building is so much more active vi) Simply replacing bricks would be costly vii) First meeting goal to gather input on how people feel about the fountain and tread lightly 1. Three tracks of feedback: 1) historic 2) arts commission 3) political d) Community engagement logistics i) Prepare comment cards to pass out at meeting ii) Add optional RSVP to mailers? iii) Each station to have one HOK representative and one SFRPD representative iv) Hold 10-15 mins Q&A v) Plan for virtual participants to write down questions. Presenters to respond live to one or two.		
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DRAFT



COMMUNITY MEETING #1
2025-02-26





AGENDA

5:00pm **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

- Project Team
- Project Context & Introduction

6:15pm **COLLECT COMMUNITY INPUT**

- Vision and Goals Station(s)
- Park Program Station(s)

7:15pm **NEXT STEPS**

- Project Schedule
- Next Community Meeting

Welcome/intro/team - City to lead discussion?

PROJECT TEAM



PROJECT CONTEXT & INTRODUCTION

Vision & Goals

Site History & Context

Site Analysis



VISIONS & GOALS

- 1 Create a **world class iconic park** representing San Francisco's rich and diverse culture for both local and international visitors
- 2 Function as a **catalyst for downtown recovery and revitalize the heart of the San Francisco Waterfront**
- 3 Provide a **wide range of programming** catered towards diverse communities
- 4 Establish an **active and welcoming space with access for all**
- 5 Restore **ecological diversity**

SITE HISTORY & CONTEXT

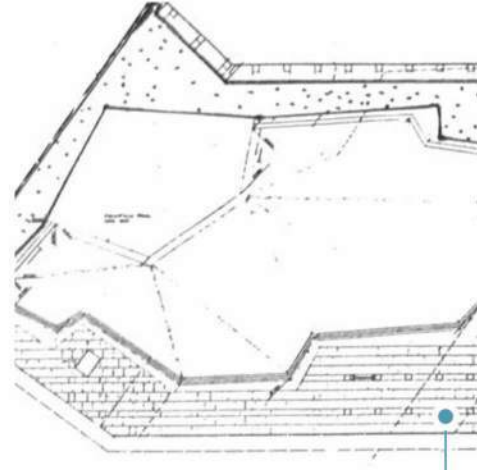
Information & Inspiration!

SITE HISTORY & CONTEXT



1900s

Site of San Francisco waterfront, primarily used for industrial and maritime purposes



1962

Lawrence Halprin proposed plaza proposal as part of City Report "What to do about Market Street"



1992

Demolition of Embarcadero Freeway after the Loma Prieta earthquake



2011

Open space transformed into Sue Bierman Park, civic activist and Supervisor



2024

Fountain no longer operational



1959

Embarcadero freeway constructed



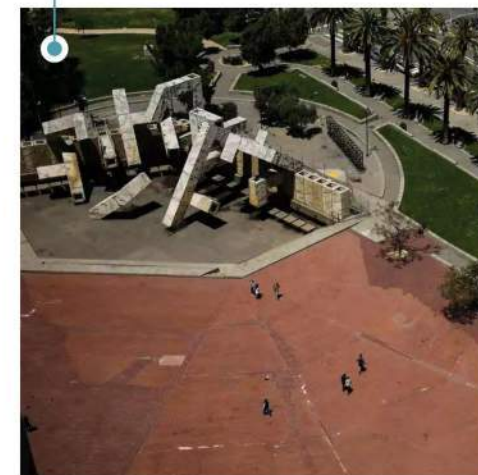
1972

Justin Herman Plaza opened, named after M. Justin Herman, director of the SF Redevelopment Agency



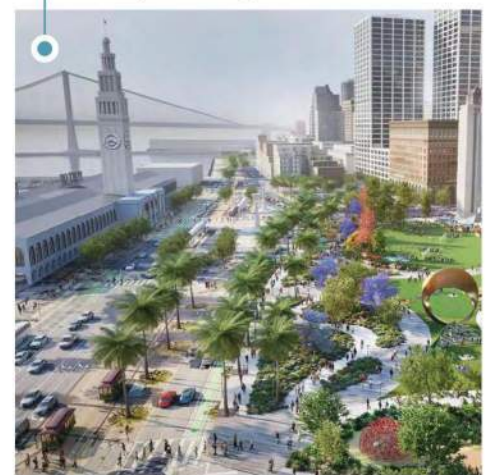
2001

San Francisco Park's Commission purchases land west of Justin Herman Plaza for open space use



2017

Renamed to Embarcadero Plaza

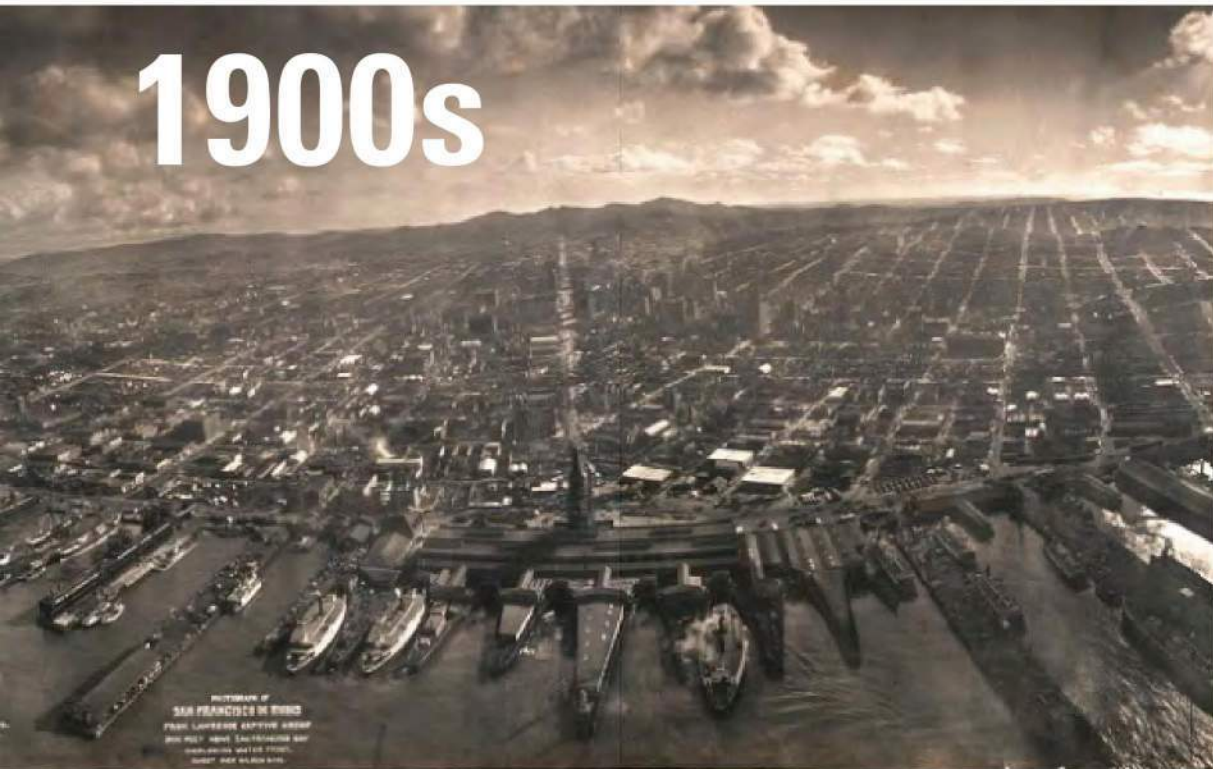


2025

New park design commences

EARLY 1900s to 1960s

Before the Park and Plaza



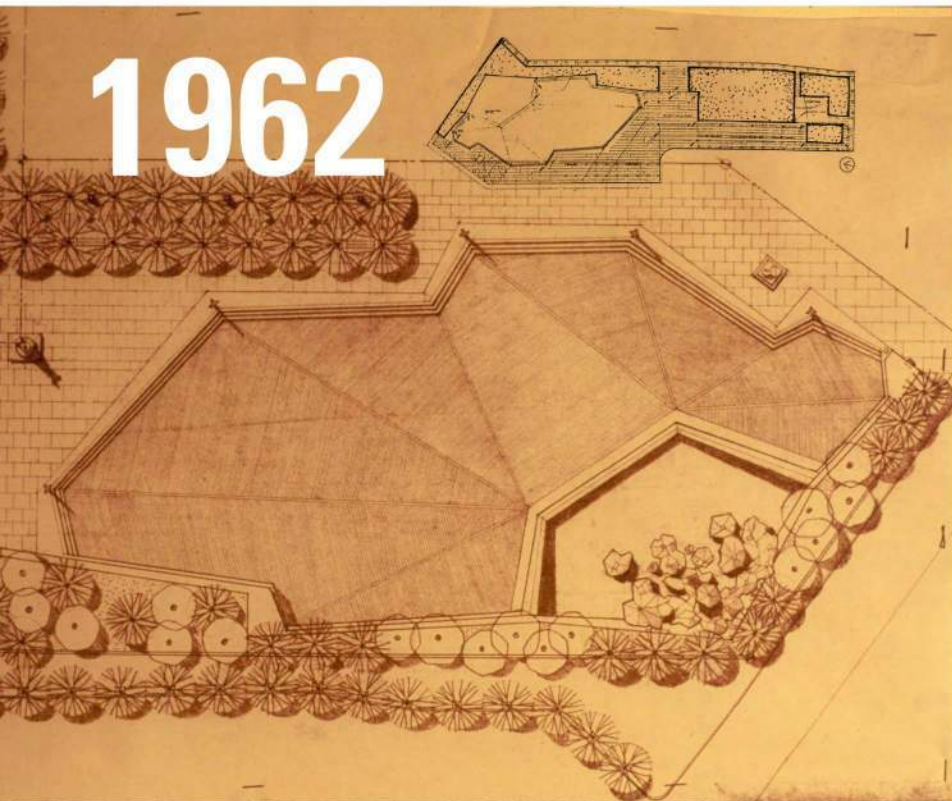
Site of San Francisco waterfront, primarily used for industrial and maritime purposes.



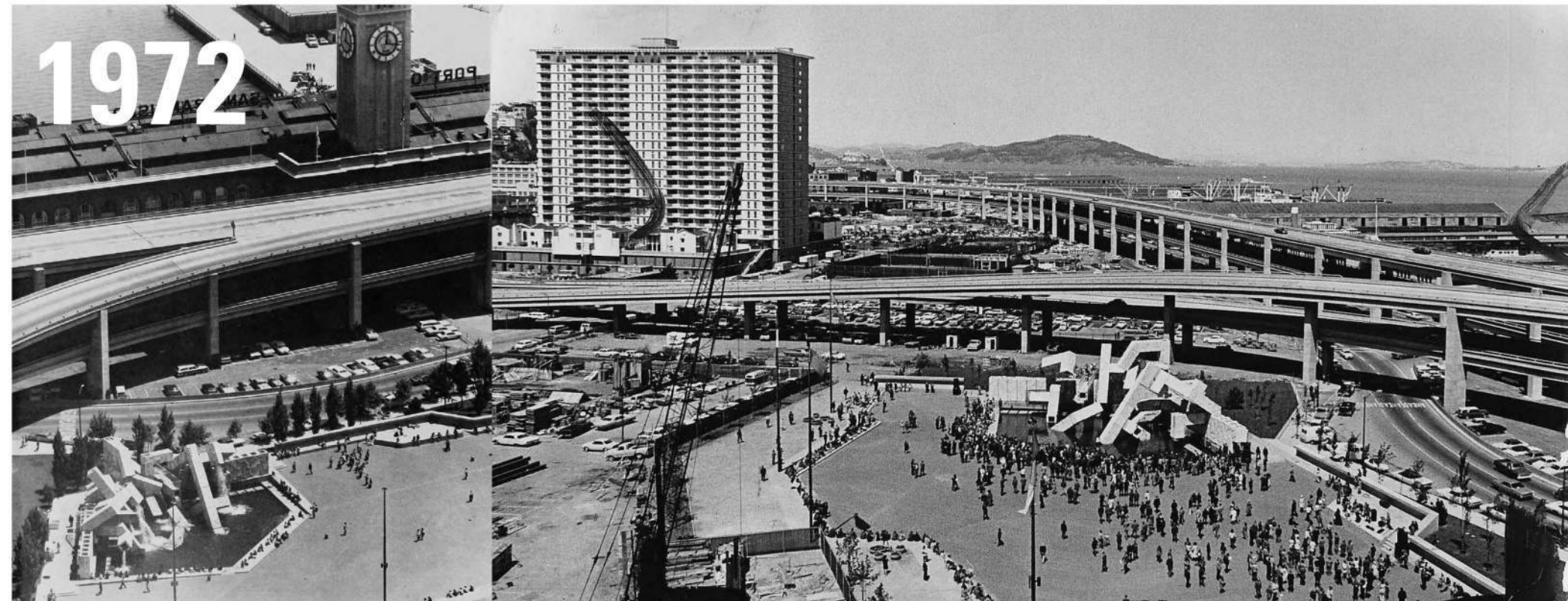
Embarcadero freeway constructed.

1960s to 1970s

Creation of the Plaza and Fountain



Lawrence Halprin proposed the plaza proposal as part of City Report "What to do about Market Street." He envisioned Market street to be redeveloped as a series of pedestrian oriented linked civic spaces, with the Plaza being one of them.



Justin Herman Plaza opened, named after M. Justin Herman, director of the SF Redevelopment Agency.

Vaillancourt fountain in the plaza was designed and installed in the context of its surroundings: to integrate the freeway and ramp into the context of the city and to counter the freeway noise.

1990s

Post-earthquake freeway removal and Embarcadero Redevelopment

1992



After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the Embarcadero Freeway sustains damage and becomes demolished.

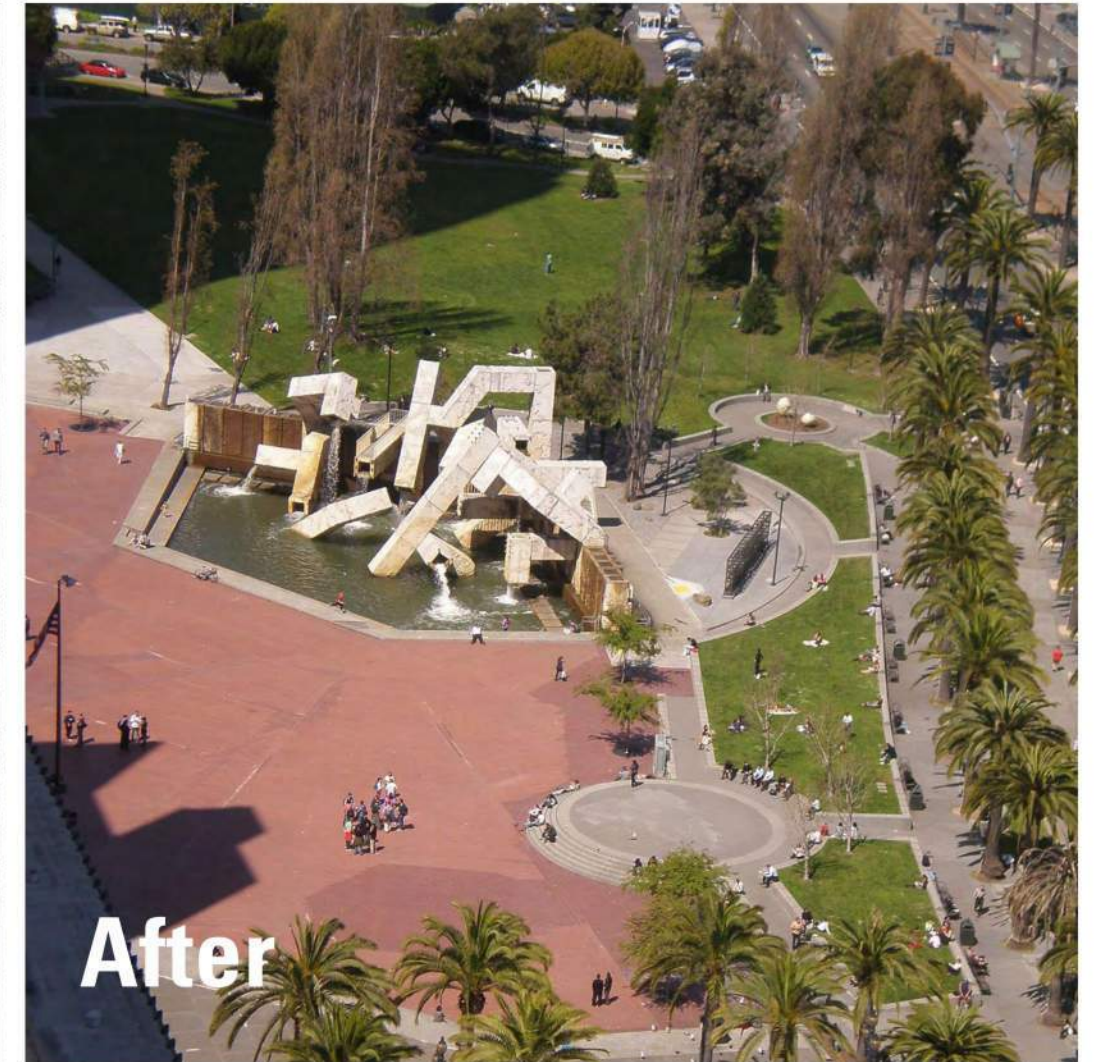
Waterfront access and sightlines to key landmarks are restored

Significant Change in Plaza Context

Removal of the freeway restored the connection and views to the Ferry building and waterfront. With the backdrop of the freeway removed, the plaza now sits in a different context than the one in which it was designed.

For information, the plaza was designed as an INWARD focused space, being framed on all sides by a freeway and the embarcadero center complex.

For inspiration, today the freeway is gone and now the plaza is free to consider a new direction- one that is more open, porous, welcoming and connected to the Bay.



2010s to 2020s

Evolution of Embarcadero Plaza and Current State of the Plaza



Justin Herman Plaza renamed back to Embarcadero Plaza



Fountain becomes inoperational and plaza shows signs of age and need for a refresh

Current Activation of the Park and Plaza



Embarcadero Plaza and Sue Bierman Park currently host a variety of beloved events in the city - an important role the new park will continue to play

2025

New Park Design Commences





EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Plaza design and programming no longer encourages significant activity.
- Inward facing design obscures valuable views to the water and ferry building.
- Insufficient drainage at Sue Bierman Park lawns.
- Fountain in disrepair and not code compliant.

SITE ANALYSIS

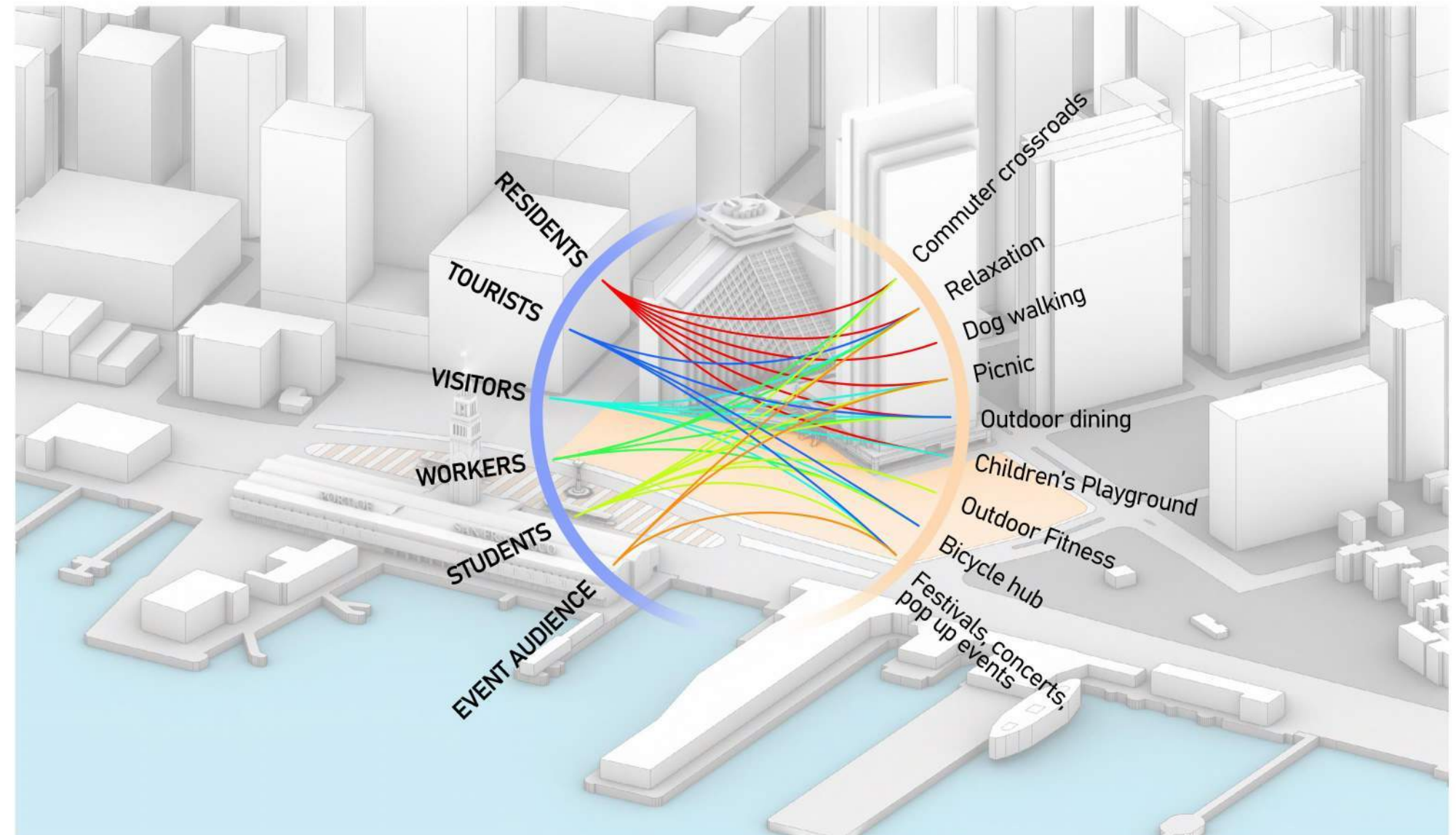


SITE ANALYSIS

USER GROUPS

Wide range of users utilize the space:

- **Residents / Families:**
Neighborhood inhabitants
- **Tourists:** Travelers to the Bay Area
- **Visitors (Regional):** Residents of the greater Bay Area visiting the City
- **Workers:** Employees in the Financial District and Waterfront businesses
- **Students:** Members of nearby academic institutions
- **Event Audience:** Attendees of occasional events held in the plaza

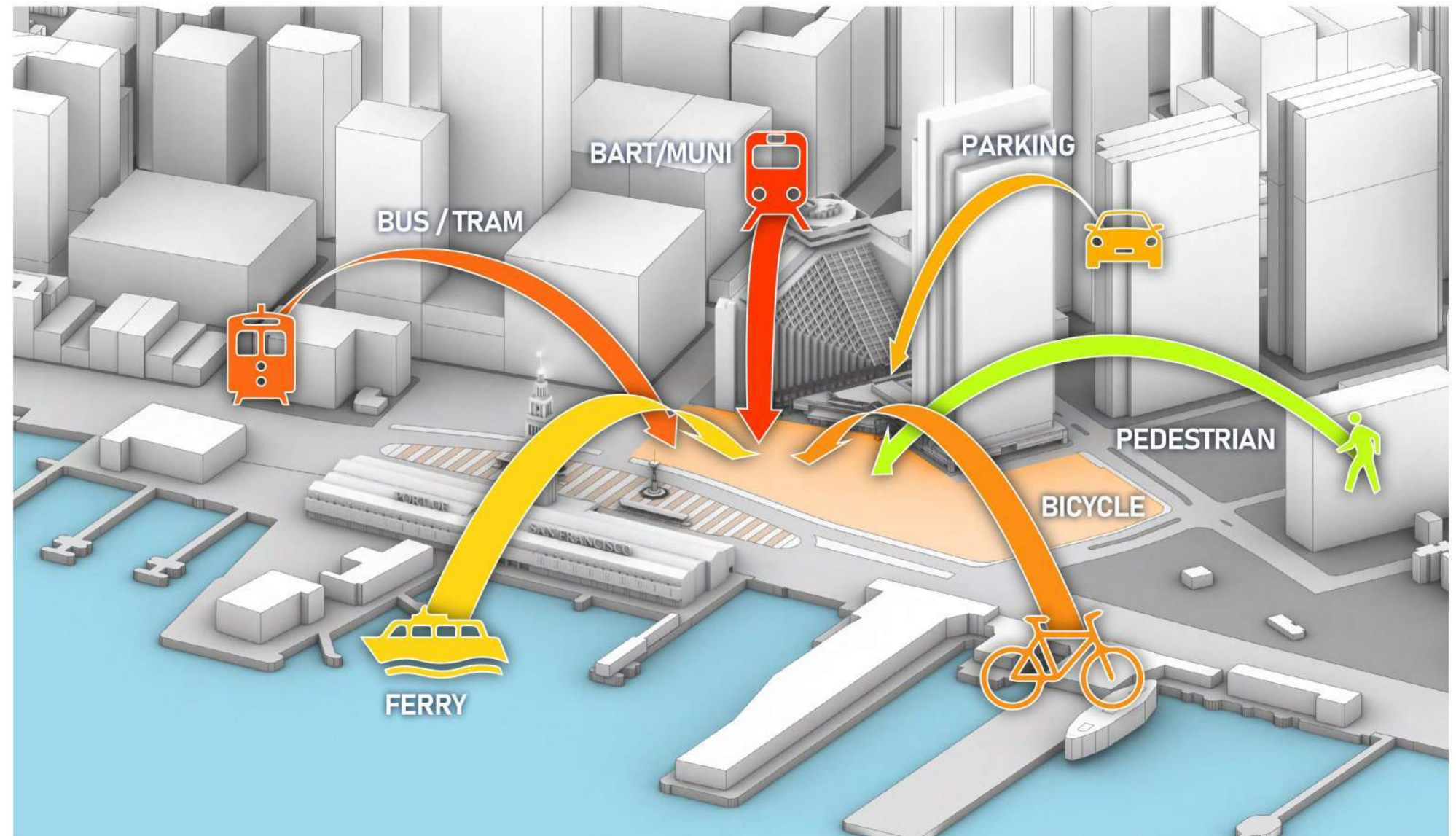


SITE ANALYSIS

PORTS OF ARRIVAL

All available existing modes of transportation bring people directly to the park:

- **Ferry:** Ferry building
- **WaterTaxi:** Pier 1.5
- **Bart / Muni / Bus / Tram:** Embarcadero Station
- **Bicycle:** Bikeshare and bike lane network
- **Vehicle:** Surface parking and underground parking at Embarcadero Center

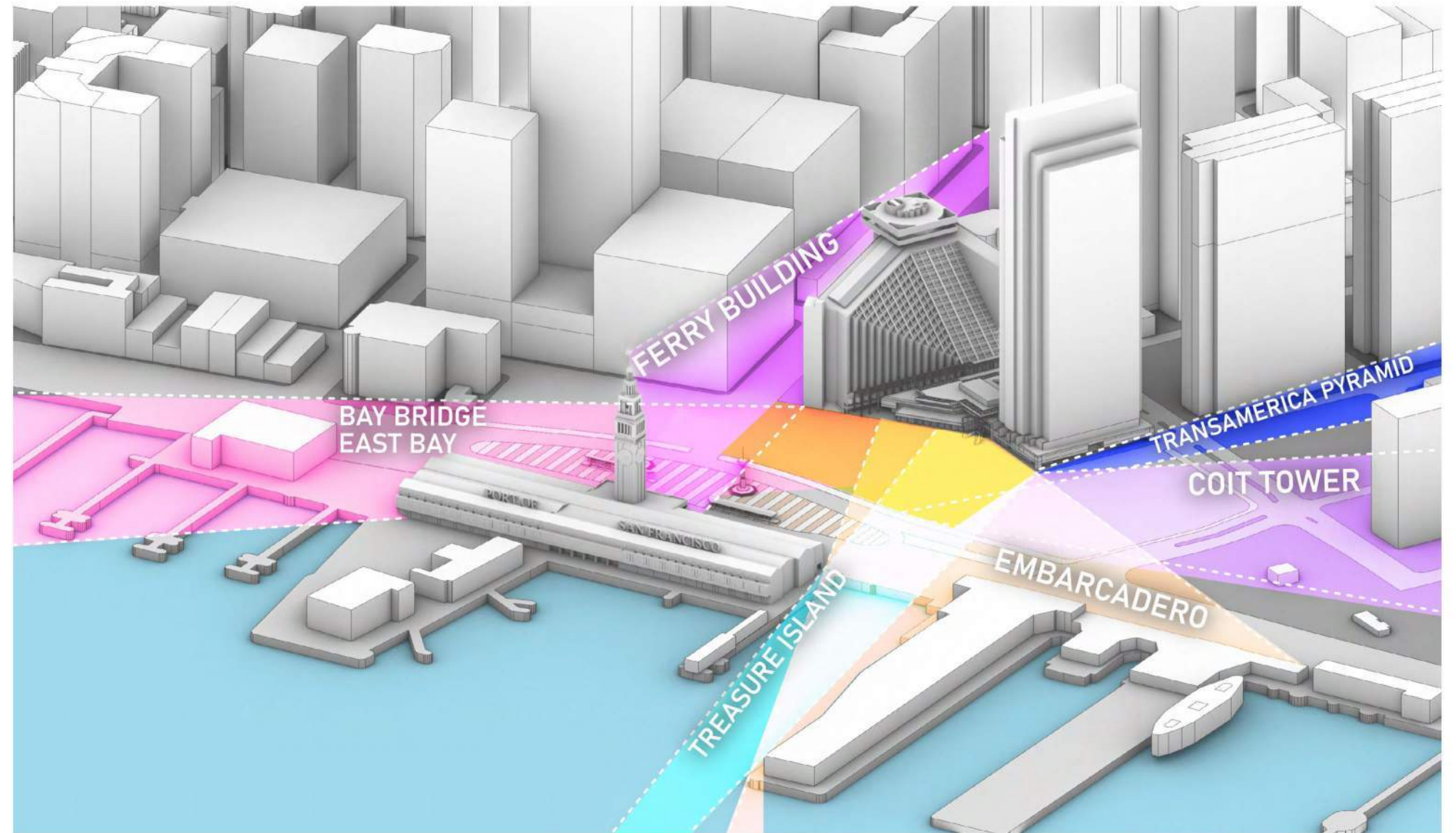


SITE ANALYSIS

SIGHTLINES & LANDMARKS

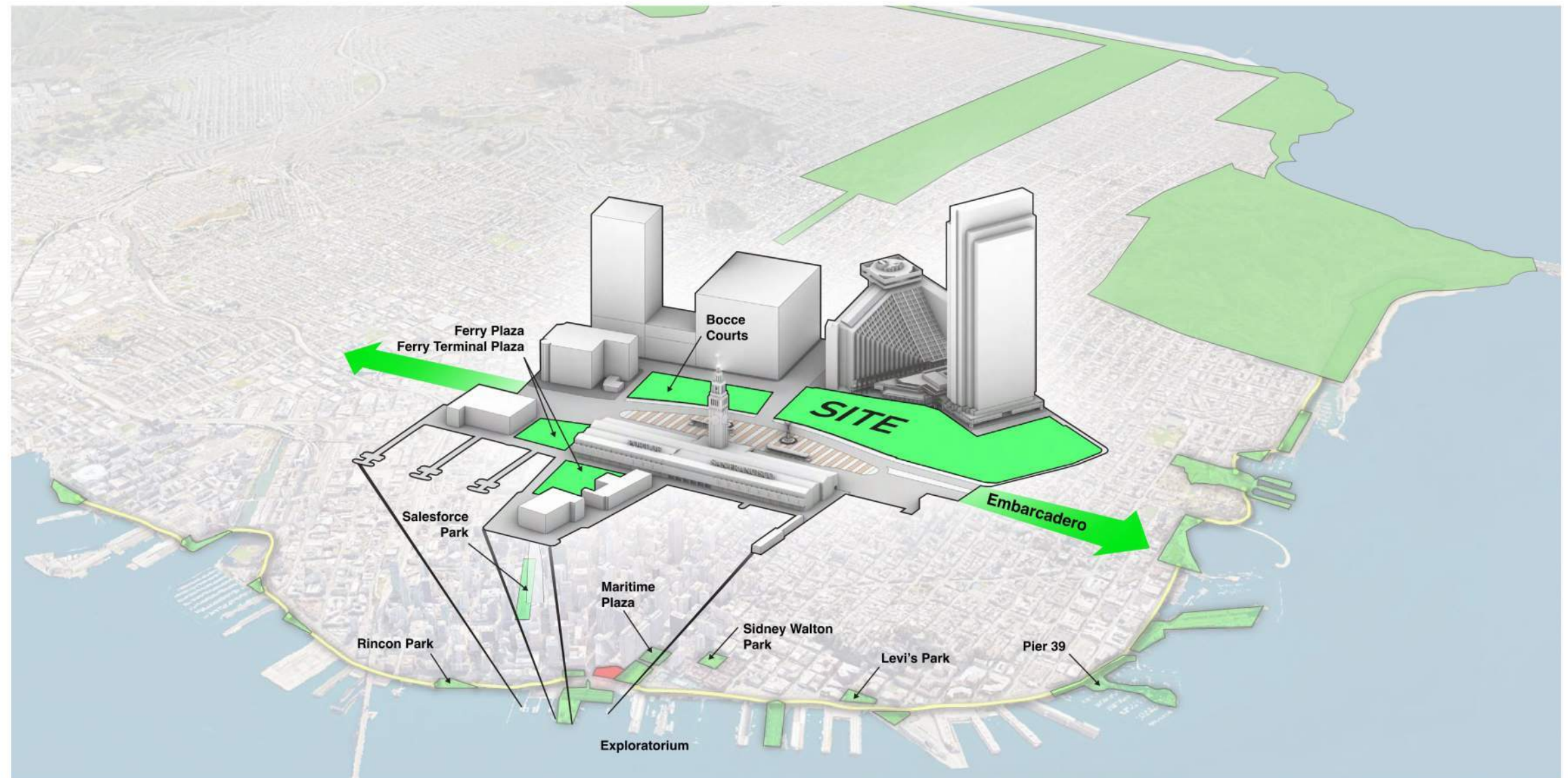
Positioned to have prime views towards significant landmarks in the vicinity:

- Ferry Building
- Bay Bridge
- East Bay
- Treasure Island
- Coit Tower
- Transamerica Pyramid



SITE ANALYSIS OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Potential to become a key destination in the extensive chain of existing and emerging open spaces along and in proximity to the waterfront.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** We will organize everyone into **three groups: A, B, C**
- 2** Each group **begins at a Station** where a representative will explain the activity

- 3** When time is called, each group **moves to the next station**
- 4** Activity is **complete when each group has visited all three stations**

Can remove if verbal instructions suffice



VIRTUAL ATTENDEES
PARTICIPATE ONLINE HERE:
<URL>

STATIONS OVERVIEW



VIRTUAL ATTENDEES
PARTICIPATE ONLINE HERE:
<URL>

1 Current Uses & Conditions

**What uses are most
successful today?**

Write down your thoughts.

2 Future Uses

**How would you most like to
use this space in the future?**

Place stickers on the
programs and amenities you
want to see here.

3 Visions & Goals

**Which of these visions
and goals are your highest
priorities?**

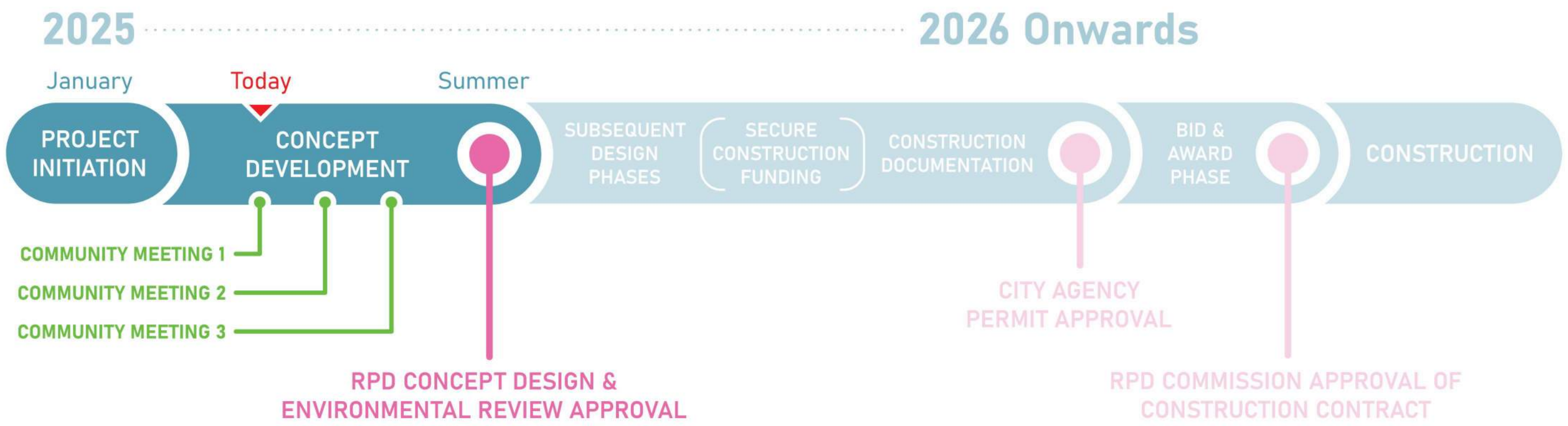
Rank 3 visions and goals that
you prioritize the most.



VIRTUAL ATTENDEES
PARTICIPATE ONLINE HERE:
<URL>

HEAD OVER TO YOUR STATIONS!

PROJECT SCHEDULE



THANK YOU!

NEXT COMMUNITY MEETING:

**MARCH ##, 2025
5-7PM**

LINK TO SURVEY:
<SURVEY URL>



SIGN UP FOR OUR BLOG:
<BLOG URL>



ANY QUESTIONS? CONTACT:
<CONTACT INFO>